Sanskrit is Fun

A Sanskrit Coursebook for Beginners

PART I

Edited by
WARWICK JESSUP
ELENA JESSUP

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PART I

The Editors wish to acknowledge the role played by David Stollar and other members of the St James School Sanskrit faculty in the preparation of the material for the Sanskrit Course.

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PART I

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BOOK I

Edited by

WARWICK & ELENA JESSUP

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COVER DRAWING: Kangaroo with Sanskrit lettering

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Foreword

by Prof Dr Satya Vrat Shastri

After a thorough perusal of these text books written by teachers of St James Schools in London for the teaching of Sanskrit, I am convinced of their utility for Indian schools. They are well-graded and supported by appropriate illustrations that make them very attractive to learners, particularly the young.

Today many Indian universities offer Sanskrit as an optional subject, even for those who are majoring in other subjects. For these students the books would be very effective in introducing them to Sanskrit which they might not have studied previously. The books could also be useful for those involved in performing arts like dance and music, or for students of Yoga and Ayurveda, subjects which have many Sanskrit references.

The first group of books entitled Sanskrit is Fun (3 volumes) introduce the learners to the Devanagari alphabet grouping the letters according to their place of articulation. Each group is given a designation, 'Family'. The 'Family' comprises both the vowels and the consonants. The learners are first taught how to draw the letters. The teaching is also helped by the humorous presentation of them in the form of animal figures. The next step is to add vowels to the consonants and then to teach joint consonants. Finally words and sentences are formed.

The second group of books seek to teach Sanskrit with reference to age-old stories of Krishna (2 volumes) and Rama (2 volumes). These stories with perennial interest of their own are then pressed into service to teach vocabulary, the formation of nouns and the conjugation of verbs in all three tenses. Adjectives and prepositions are also covered .

By the time learners have completed these books it is expected they would have a good basic grasp of the Sanskrit language, its vocabulary, structure and grammar. These books are an attempt to teach Sanskrit in a simple and systematic way that may well dispel the notion that Sanskrit is a difficult language.

Dr Shastri is currently an Honorary Professor at the Special Centre for Sanskrit Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He was the Head of the Department of Sanskrit and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Delhi, where he was the Pandit Manmohan Nath Dar Professor of Sanskrit (1970–1995).

Preface

by Professor Richard Gombrich

It is a privilege for me to be invited to introduce this set of textbooks. They have been compiled with loving care by the teachers of the Sanskrit Department of St James School in London. Their slow birth reflects the years of teaching experience which have gone into their making.

Sanskrit is by no means an easy language: even in India it is mastered only by a small minority of the population. The grammar is complicated, even if someone who masters it will finally discover that it is more systematic and less irregular than that of English. The vocabulary is vast, reflecting the vast span of time and geographical area over which Sanskrit has been used. Learning to read and write an Indian script is also a major undertaking for a student from another culture. (Luckily for us Europeans, at least it is written left to write and top to bottom.)

On the other hand, Sanskrit is not only a beautiful language written in a beautiful script; it is the vehicle of classical Indian culture, the culture which has given the world one of its greatest literatures and greatest civilizations. Sanskrit achieved something not very different from the form it still has today more than three thousand years ago. The reason why it has survived so well, and may well outlive most of the languages which the world is now using, is not hard to understand: it is because of the aesthetic attractions and the intellectual and spiritual value of the content of so many Sanskrit texts.

Only a few students are likely to have the opportunity to go on to study Sanskrit in depth, so that they can enjoy reading Sanskrit by themselves. There will be so many rival claims on their attention. But even those who only work through these books are likely to look back on the experience with satisfaction, a feeling that they have done something truly worth while. And the few who go further will be grateful that these books have launched them on an unforgettable experience.

Prof Gombrich was the Boden Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Oxford from 1976 to 2004 and was a past President of the Pali Text Society (1994–2002) and General Editor Emeritus of the Clay Sanskrit Library. He is currently the Boden Professor of Sanskrit Emeritus, University of Oxford

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Part One: The Sanskrit Alphabet

Parents or teachers supervising or teaching from this course will need to be able to recite the Sanskrit alphabet, or at least the section currently under study. In fact, the alphabet falls conveniently into short sections, and it is best if teachers and pupils are able to recite each family of sounds from memory before attempting to write it. As the course continues, the recitation of this alphabet will need to be a daily practice until, by the end of Part One, the whole alphabet is known by heart. This recitation helps the student to remember the order of the five families and the order of the sounds within each family.

In general, the order of learning to read the script is:

(a) hearing the sound,
(b) repeating it aloud,
(c) copying the shape of the letter; and
(d) reading the letter.

Ideally, the students should see the writing of the letter demonstrated and then copy it, perhaps one part at a time, depending on how complicated it is.

In general, the order for writing each letter is:

(a) the top line is drawn first,
(b) then the descender; and
(c) then any additional shape.

When writing a letter, the student should hear the sound in the mind. Each time the student hears the sound of the letter in the mind while writing it, the connection between sound and shape is reinforced.

The students should always be encouraged to write each character more perfectly than the one before. This ensures that the writing improves rather than deteriorates.

It is worth mentioning that both traditionally and in the best modern practice the top line of each letter is written first and, even when writing words, only enough of this line is written for one letter at a time.

READING PRACTICE

Daily reading charts are given at regular intervals during the course to provide the necessary practice. These should be read every day until another reading chart is given in the text. This practice is only effective if the teacher ensures that each student's finger is exactly beneath the letter being read. When the students can read a page fluently they should be asked to read it backwards (i.e., moving from right to left).

DAILY AND WEEKLY TESTING

No written course can act as a substitute for a teacher's or student's intelligence and ingenuity. Ideally, each step would be measured precisely to the needs of each pupil. Tests need to be given to ensure that the student is ready for the next stage. The following should be practised regularly:

(a) reading of letters and words written in a random order on the blackboard (or, in the case of a student, on paper), and

(b) dictation: a weekly dictation of the letters covered that week and in previous weeks. This stimulates the student's interest in learning and acts as a guide for the teacher as to the effectiveness of the teaching.

THE WRITING OF SANSKRIT

Each Sanskrit letter is a 'character' and can be appreciated best in the initial stages by writing without reliance on any guidelines on the page. After a little while a top line is useful from which to hang the letters. Each letter should be hung freely from this line without attempting to touch a bottom line. In this respect, it is comparable to English writing, where the letters rest on the bottom line and do not attempt to touch the top line. Thus, in Sanskrit, there will always be a space between the bottom of the letters and the next line down.

There is another factor to note in the writing of Sanskrit letters. Calligraphy has traditionally been done on a slanting surface, and this is recommended for the writing of Sanskrit. One reason for this is that the student's back is thereby allowed to be more upright and there is a closer view of the writing, encouraging finer attention.

SANSKRIT RECITATION

As with the learning of any language, whilst the elements of that language are being introduced, it is helpful if examples of Sanskrit literature are recited on a daily basis. This gives a taste of the beauty of the language.

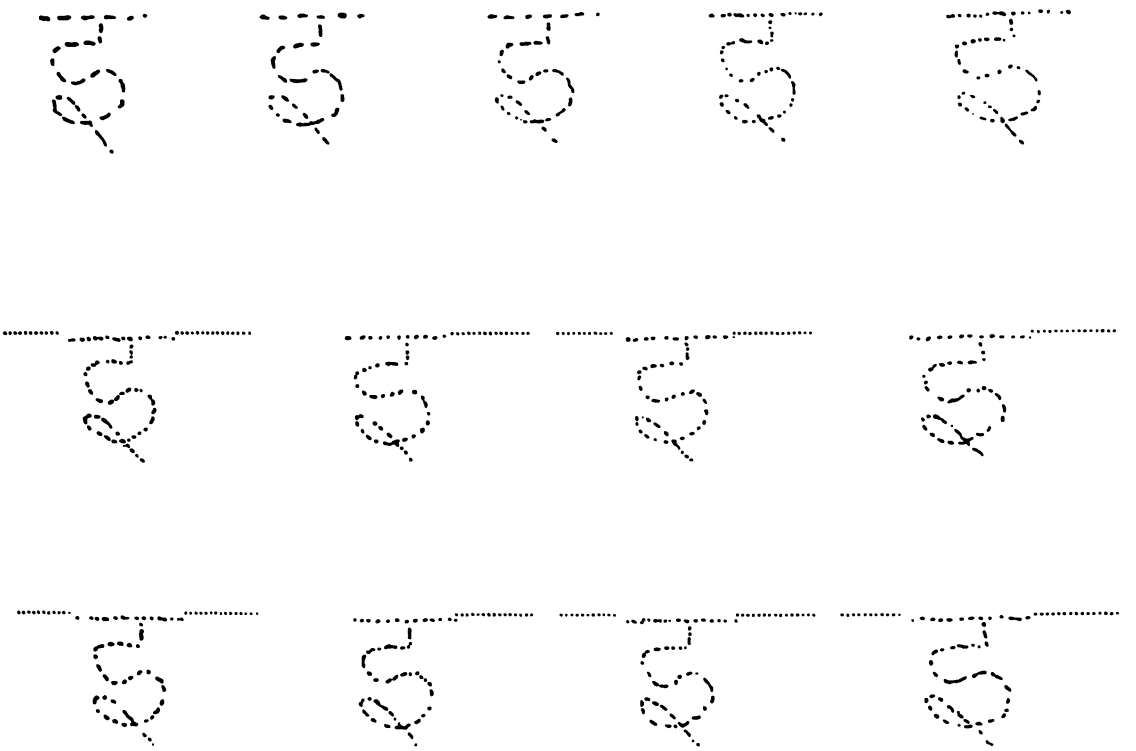
Audio and video resources are available at: www.sanskritexams.org.uk

Note to Teacher/Student: Recite अ, ड, उ, ऋ, ऌ *before attempting the exercises on pages 2-9.*

अ

Now try your own अ !

ह



☆ ★ ☆ ★ ☆ ★ ☆ ★ ☆ ★ ☆ ★ ☆ ★ ☆ ★ ☆ ★ ☆

Can you write ह ?

उ

उ उ

उ उ उ उ

उ उ उ उ

☆★☆★☆★☆★☆★☆★☆★☆★☆★☆★☆★☆★☆★☆★☆★☆★☆

Write उ yourself.

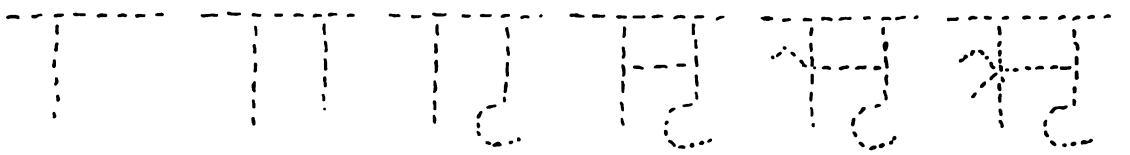
उ

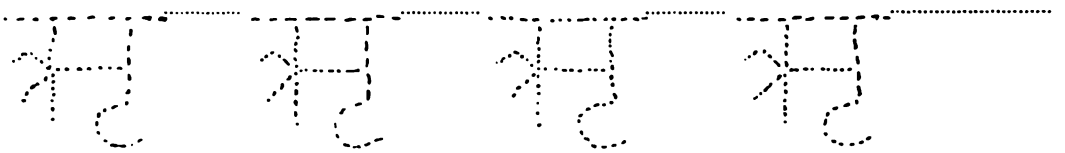
अ ☆ इ ☆ उ

Practise the following letters:

अ	इ	उ

ऋ



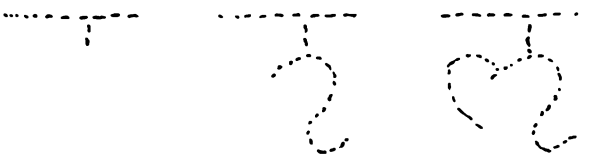


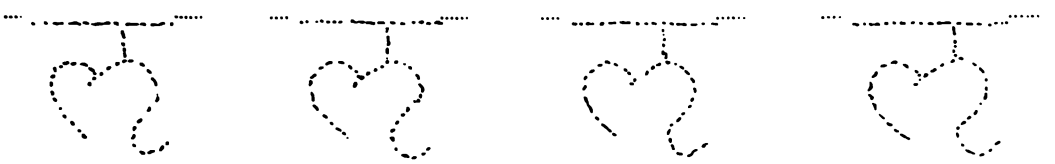
Write ऋ six times by yourself!

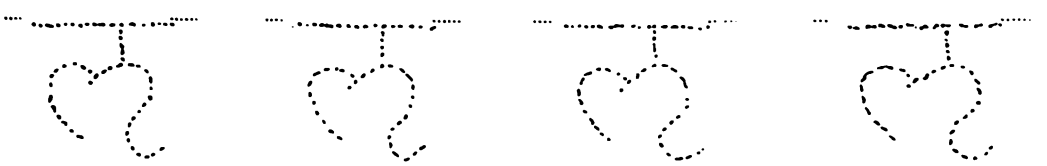
ऋ

ऋ

ल







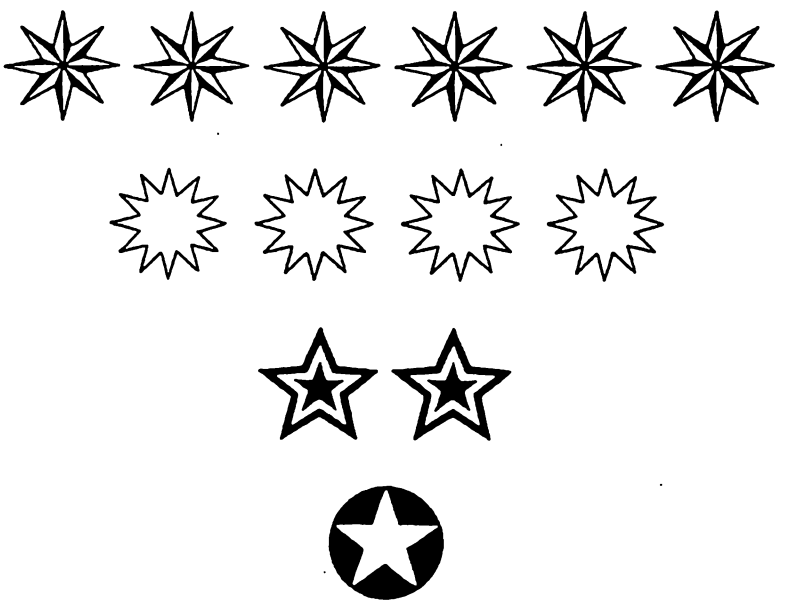
★☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆★

Now write ल yourself.

ल

Daily Reading Chart 1

अ इ उ ऋ ऌ



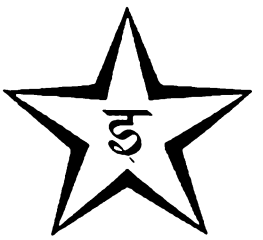
अ ★ इ ★ उ ★ ऋ ★ ऌ

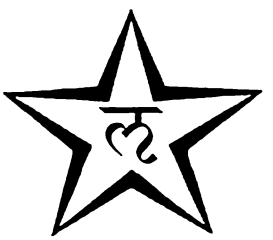
Now practise the following letters:

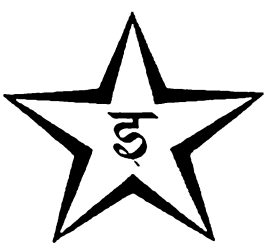
अ	
इ	
उ	
ऋ	
ऌ	

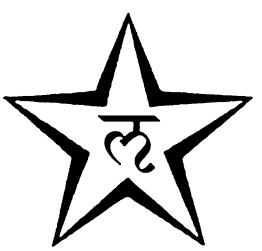
☆☆☆ The Stars ☆☆☆

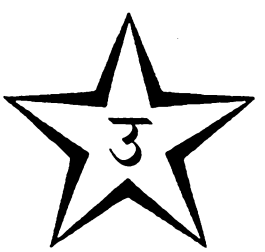
Can you read the letters on the stars?







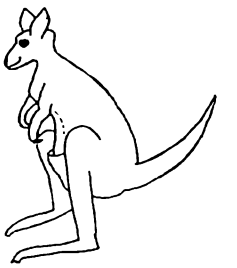




The third letter on this page uses a new shape which should be introduced in the following manner:

1. ा 2. ग 3. र 4. रा 5. ख

The अ Family



Copy the following letters:

अ

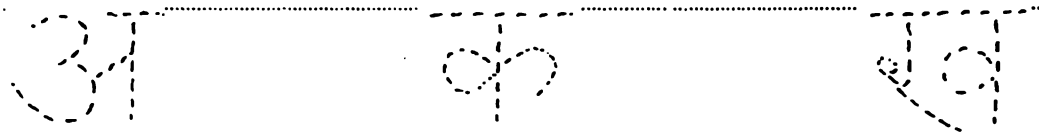
क

ख

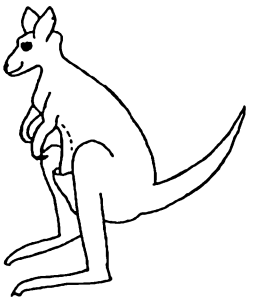
The अ Family

Now practise all the letters together:

अ क ख



The अ Family



Copy these letters:

ग ग ....

ग ग ....

घ घ ....

घ घ ....

घ घ ....

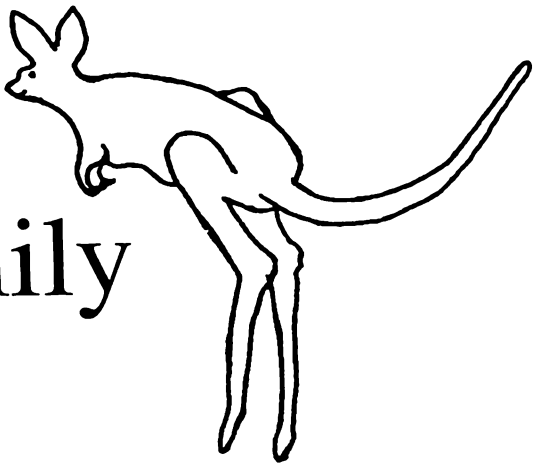
The अ Family

Now write अ क ख ग घ all together:

अ		
क		
ख		
ग		
घ		

Note to Teacher/Student: Introduce ह in the following manner:

1. ह्न 2. ह्म 3. ह्य



The अ Family

Copy these letters:

ङ ङ

ङ ङ

ह्न ह्म ह्य ह्र

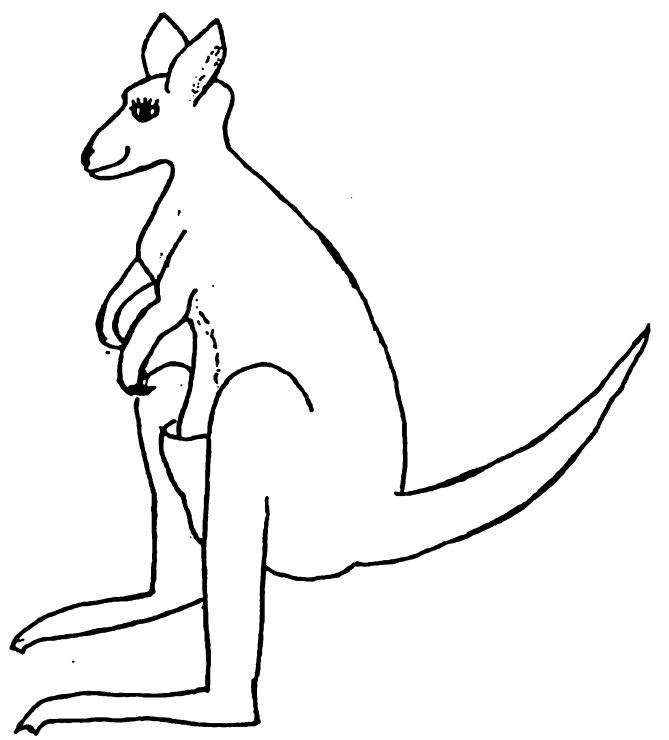
ह्ल ह्व

ह्ल ह्व

Daily Reading Chart 2

अ इ उ ऋ ऌ

अ क ख ग घ ङ ह

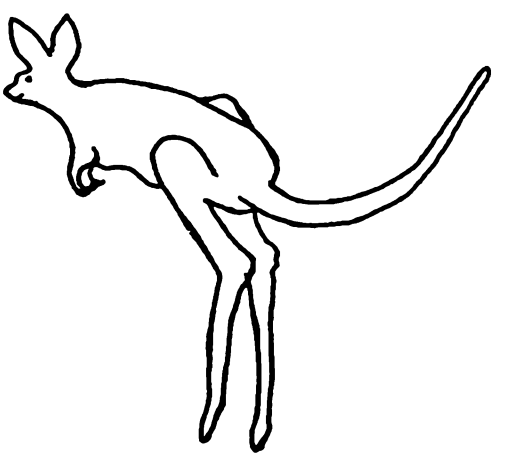


The अ Family

Write the whole अ family together:

अ क ख ग घ ङ ह

अ क ख ग घ ङ ह



The अ Family

Practise the अ family. Then try to write the family from memory in your exercise book.

अ					
क					
ख					
ग					
घ					
ङ					
ह					

This is where the अ family lives.
Copy each letter three times. Then,
fill in the house and colour it in.

अ .....

क .....

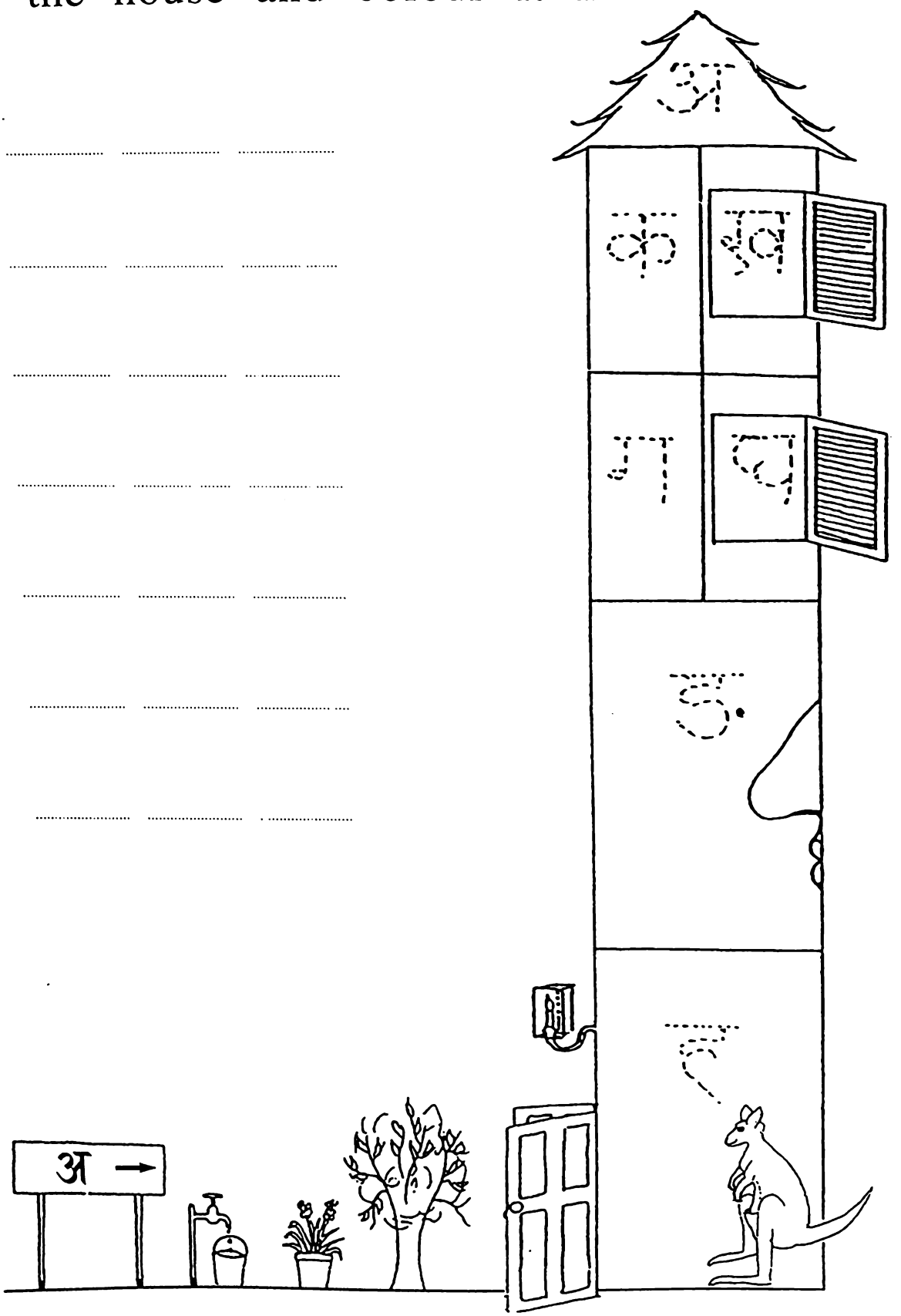
ख .....

ग .....

घ .....

ङ .....

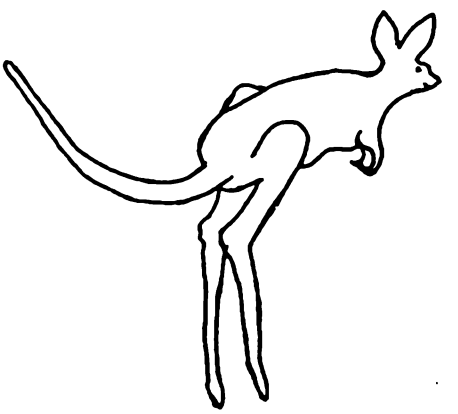
ह .....



The अ Family

Here is the अ family.
Colour any अ red, any क green, any ख blue, any ग purple, any घ orange, any ङ yellow and any ह brown.

अ क ख ग घ ङ

क  ह

ङ ख ह क ग अ

Now we can read a Sanskrit word!

Read the following:

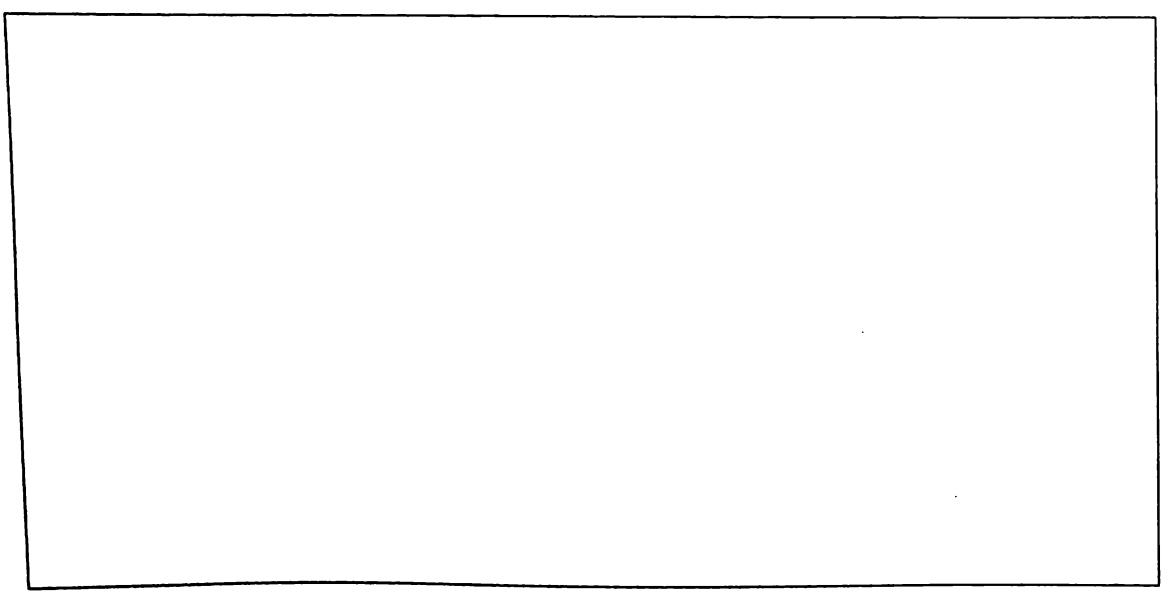
ख

ग

खग

A खग is a bird.

Now draw a खग in the box:



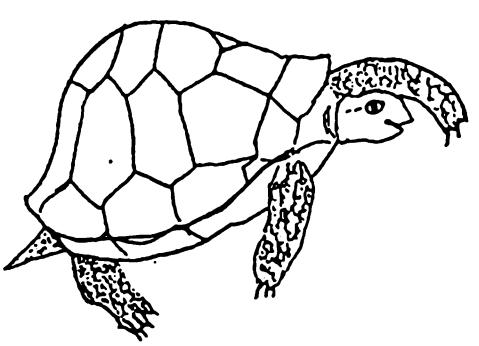
The Kangaroo

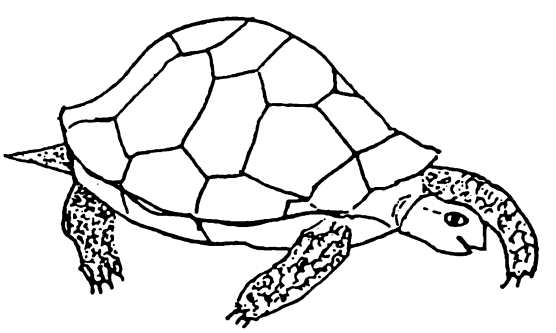
Read the letters coming from the kangaroo's pouch.

The ड Family

Copy the following letters:

ड	च	छ
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....





The झ Family

Copy these two letters:

ज	ज		
ज			
ज	झ	झ	
झ			

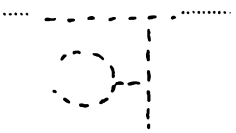
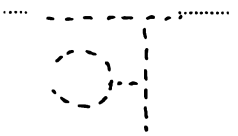
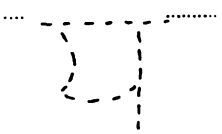
The इ Family

Now write all the members of the इ family that we have learned so far:

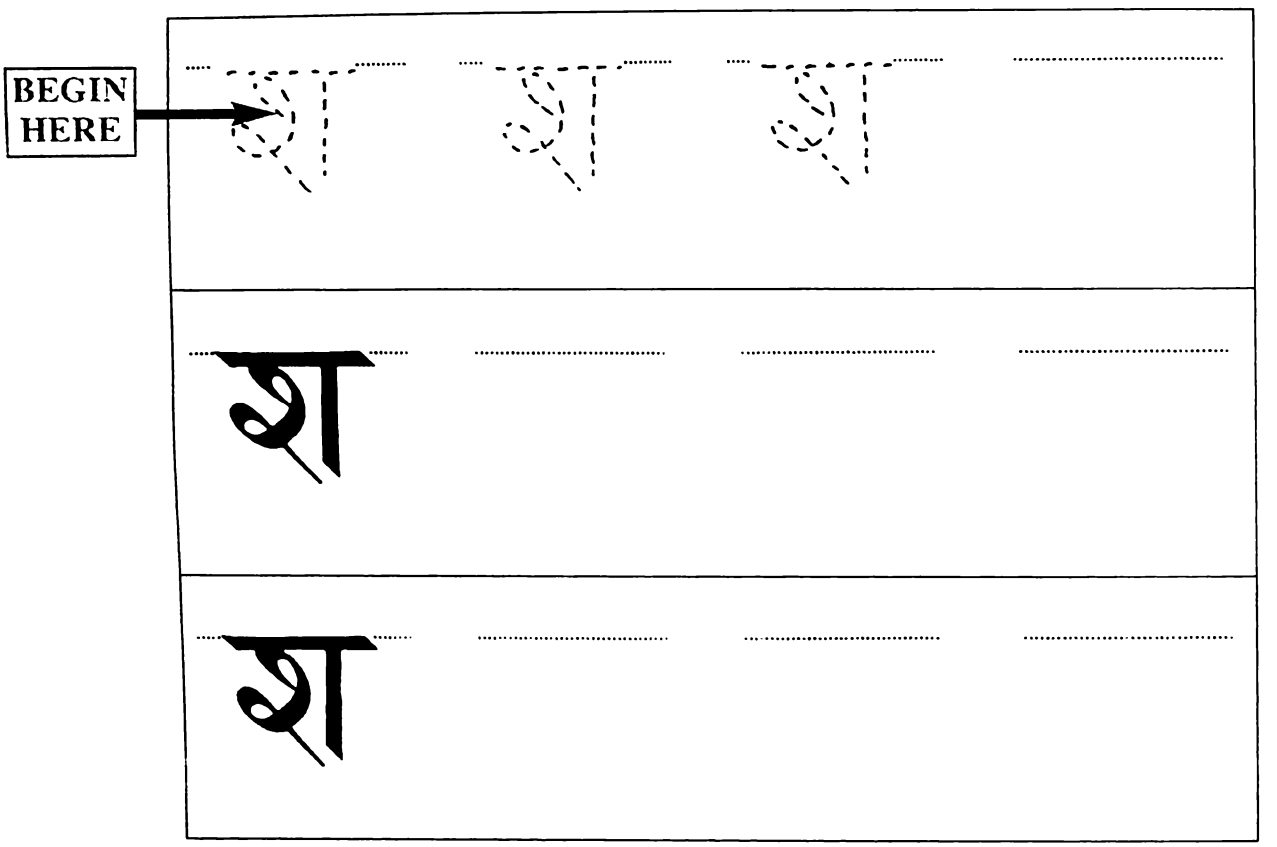
इ च छ ज झ

The इ Family

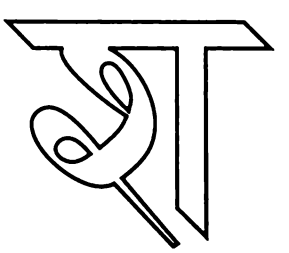
Now write the rest of the इ family.

			
अ			
			
य			

This is a tricky letter. The arrow shows where to begin the curly shape.



If you have time, you can colour in the big श.

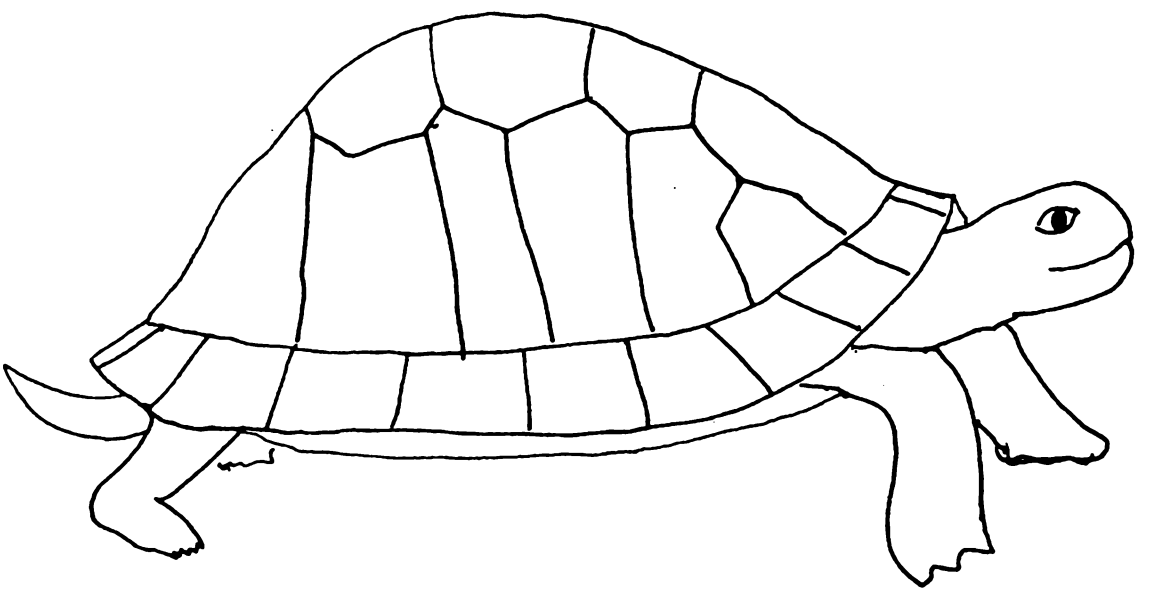


Daily Reading Chart 3

अ इ उ ऋ ऌ

अ क ख ग घ ङ ह

इ च छ ज झ ञ य श

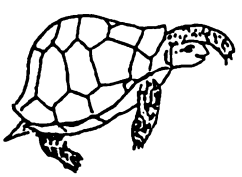


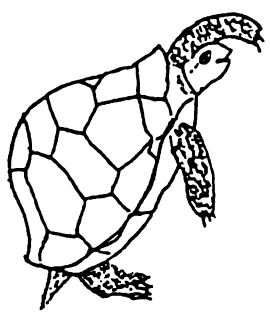
The इ Family

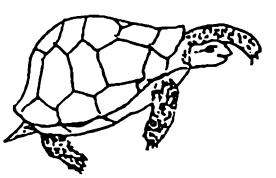
Now you can write all the members of the इ family!

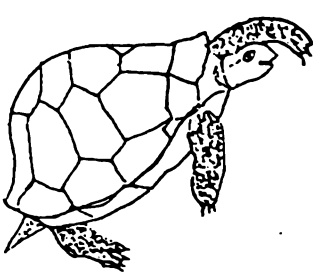
इ	च	छ	ज	झ
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

ञ	य	श
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....









The इ Family

Practise the इ family. Then try to write the family from memory in your exercise book.

छ					
च					
छ					
ज					
झ					
ञ					
य					
श					

The इ family lives on Sanskrita Street. Copy each letter three times. Then, colour in the house.

इ ....

च ....

छ ....

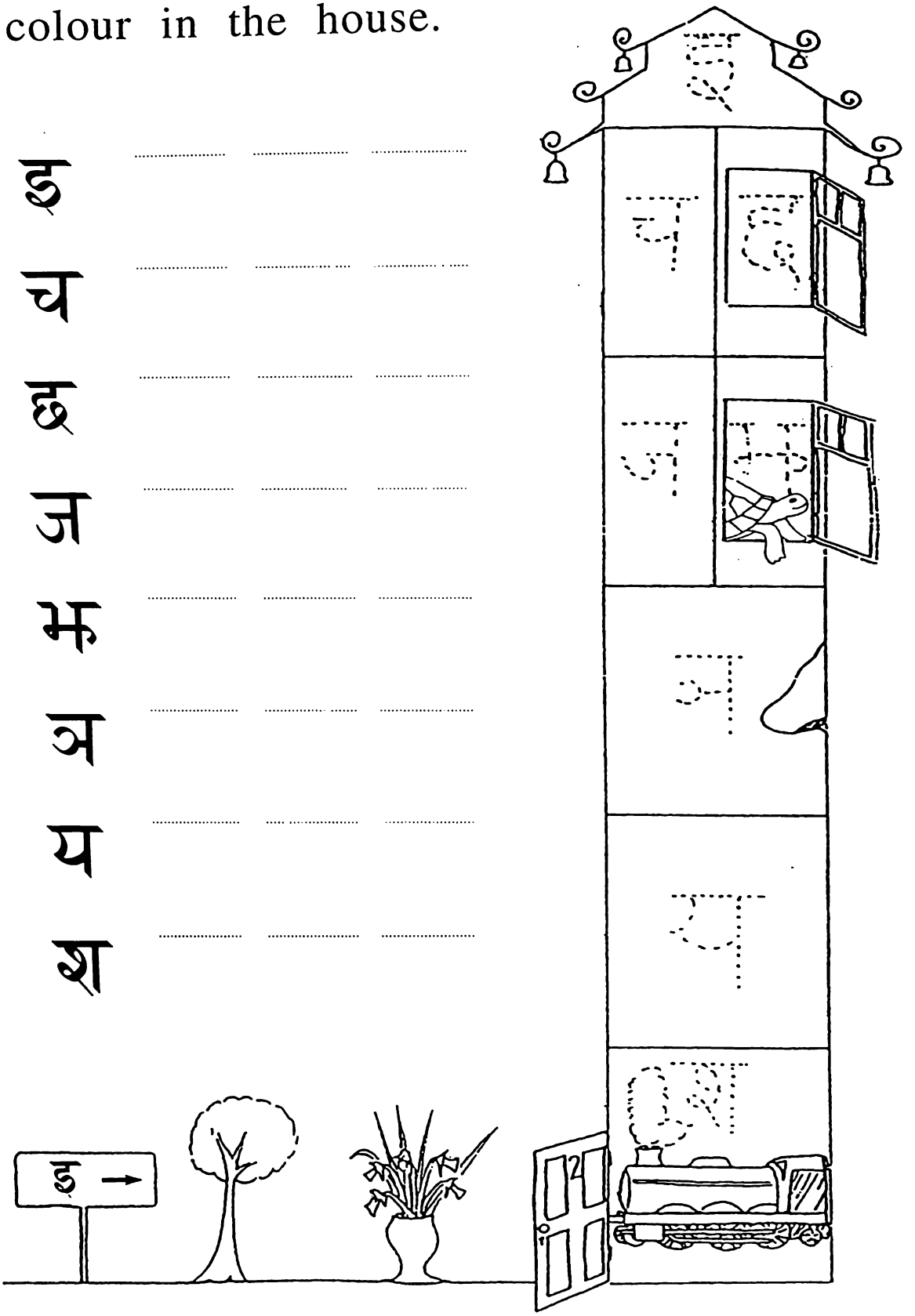
ज ....

झ ....

ञ ....

य ....

श ....



Let's read a second Sanskrit word!

Read the following:

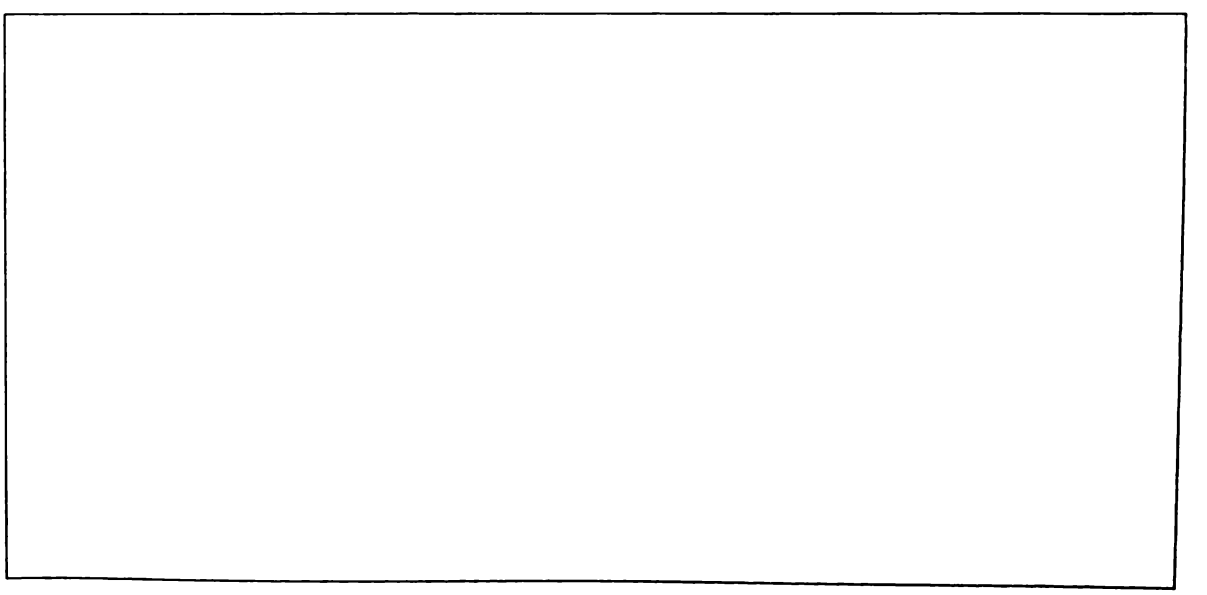
ग

ज

गज

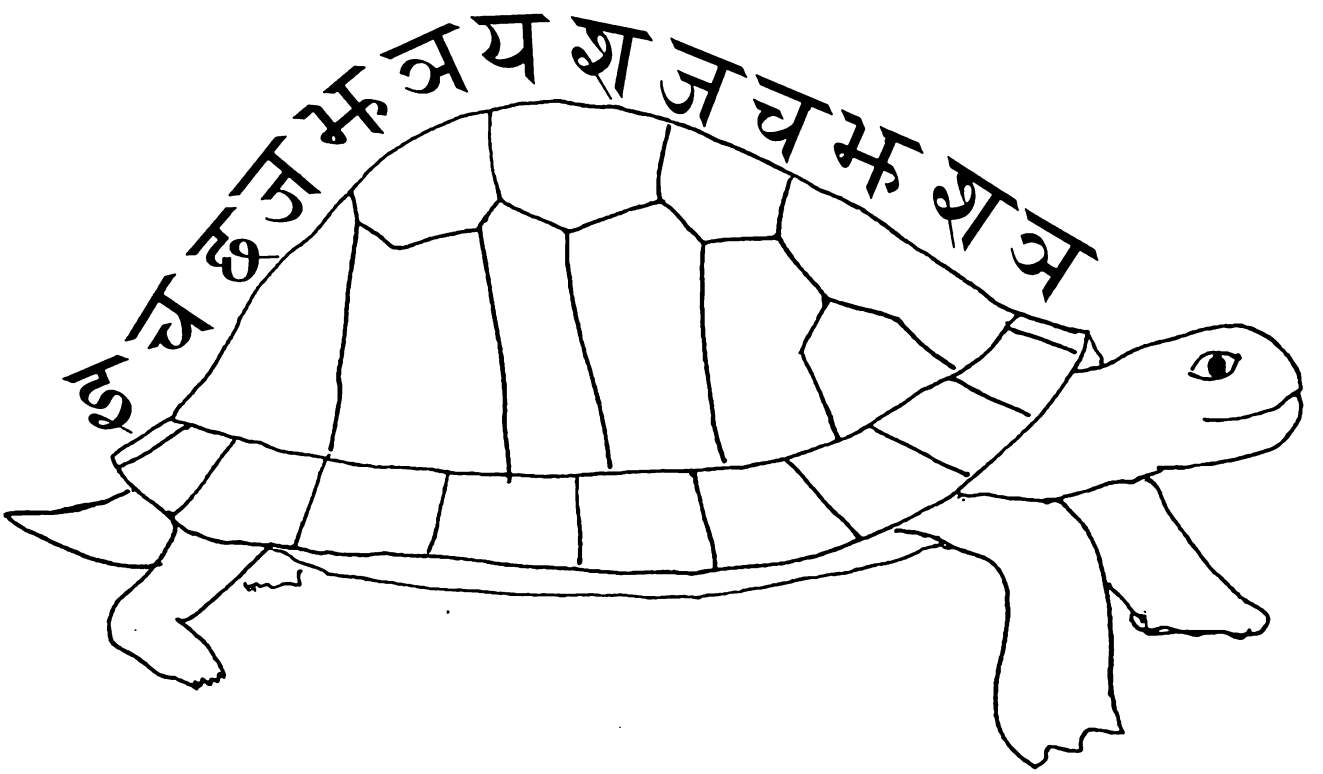
A गज is an elephant.

Now draw a गज in the box:



The Turtle

Read the letters on the turtle's shell. Then, you can fill in the spaces of the turtle's shell with letters of the ङ family.



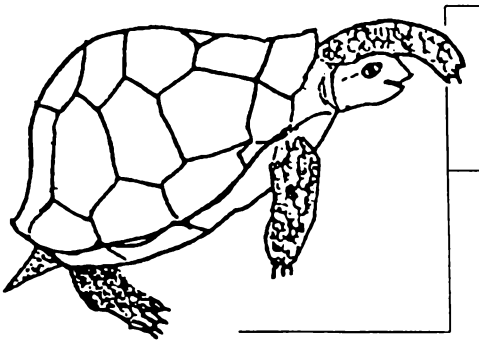
अ and इ Families

Practise these letters and sound them:

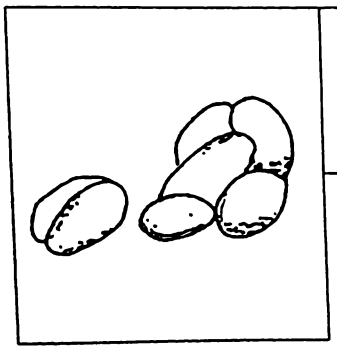
अ				इ			
क				च			
ख				छ			
ग				ज			
घ				झ			
ङ				ञ			
ह				य			
				श			

Game: Rescue the Mother Turtle's Eggs

Rescue the eggs by reading from अ to घ.
Then bring the eggs back to the mother
by reading from घ back to अ.



अ	क	ख	ग	घ
				ङ
छ	च	ज	झ	ञ
ज				
झ	ञ	य	श	
				च
घ	छ	क	श	झ

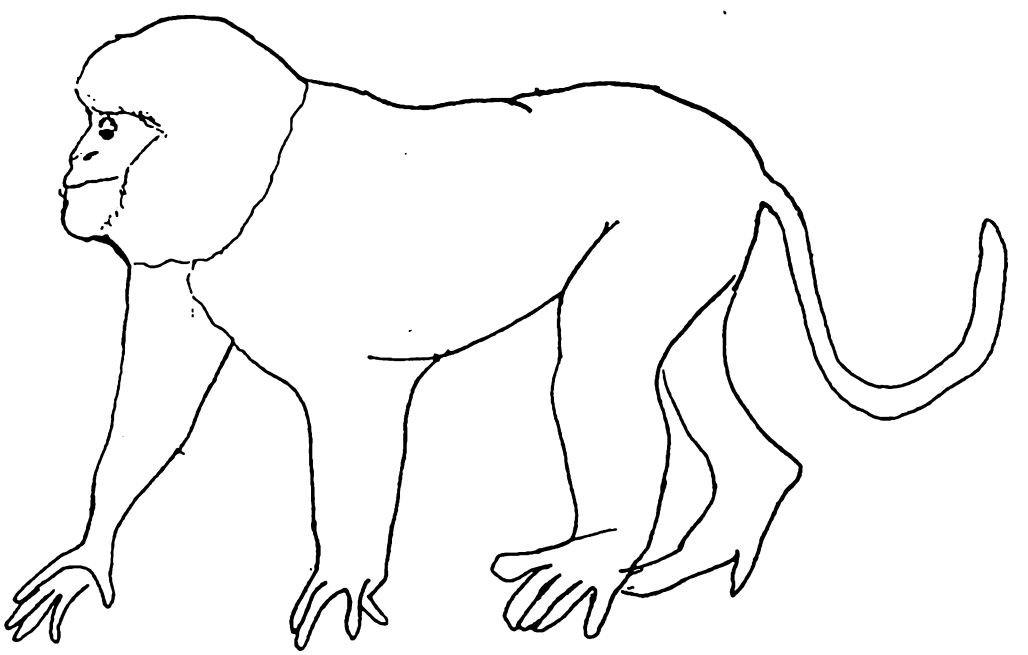


Note to Teacher/Student: Recite the ऋ family before attempting the exercise below.

The ऋ Family

Copy the following letters:

ऋ			
ट			
ठ			



The ਸ਼ Family

Now write the letters together.

ਸ਼ ਟ ਠ

When you have finished, draw a monkey in the space below!

The ऋ Family

Now write these letters:

ङ

ढ

Now write the following:

ऋ ट ठ ङ ढ

The ऋ Family

Now write these letters:

ण	.....	.....	.....	.....
र	.....	.....	.....	.....
ष	.....	.....	.....	.....

Now write them out together:

ण र ष

.....

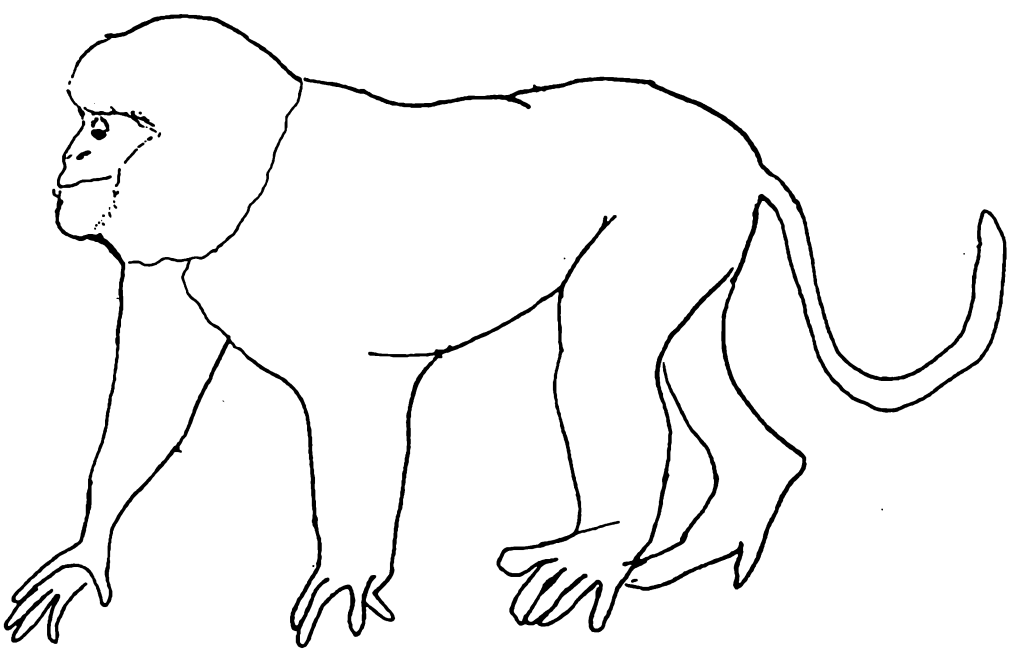
Daily Reading Chart 4

अ इ उ ऋ ऌ

अ क ख ग घ ङ ह

इ च छ ज झ ञ य श

ऋ ट ठ ड ढ ण र ष



The ऋ Family

You can now write the whole ऋ family!

ऋ

ट

ठ

ड

ढ

ण

र

ष

The ऋ Family

Practise the ऋ family. Then try to write the family from memory in your exercise book.

ऋ	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ट	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ठ	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ड	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ढ	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ण	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
र	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ष	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

The third house belongs to the ऋ family. Copy each letter three times. Then, colour in the house.

ऋ ....

ट ....

ठ ....

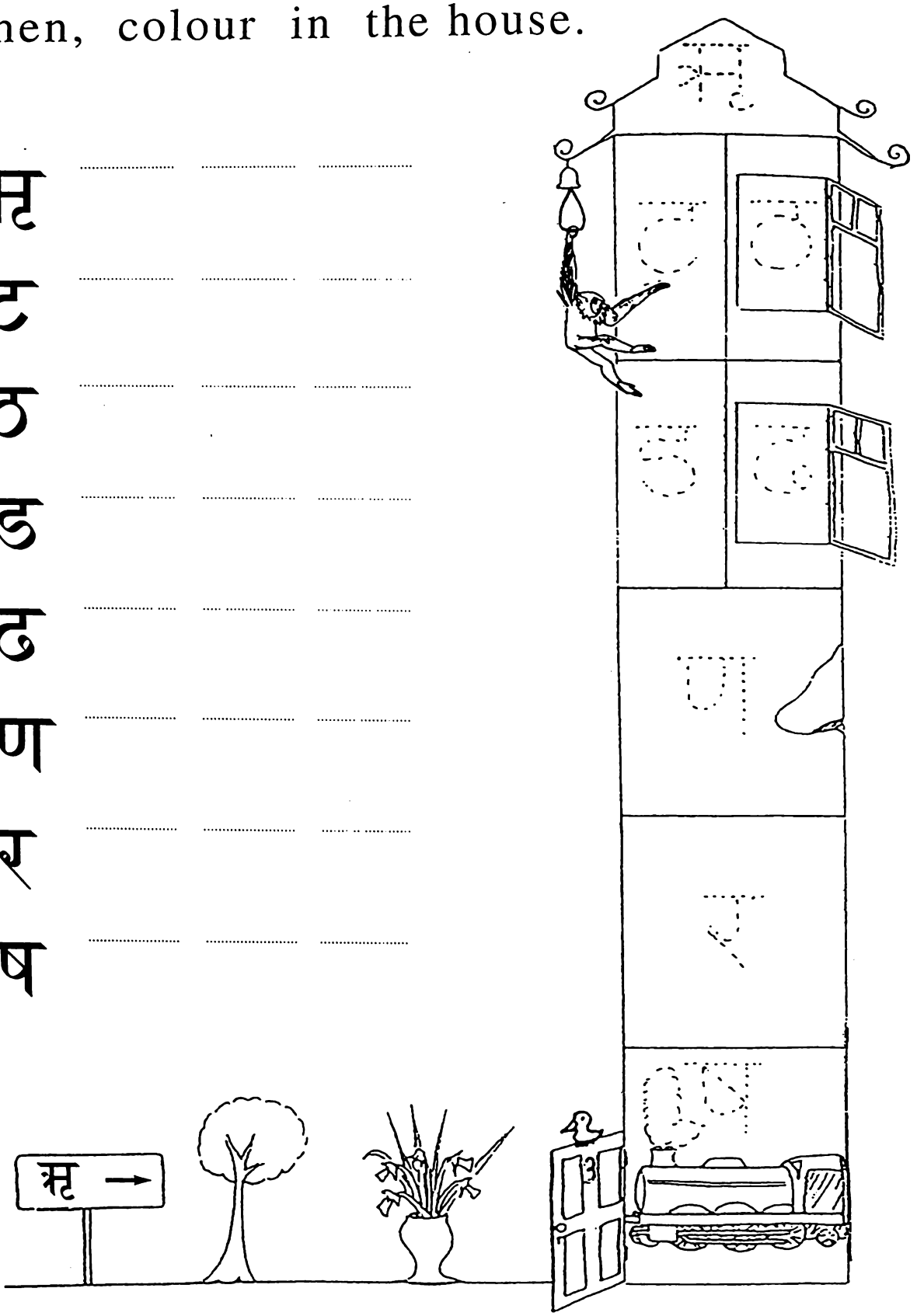
ड ....

ढ ....

ण ....

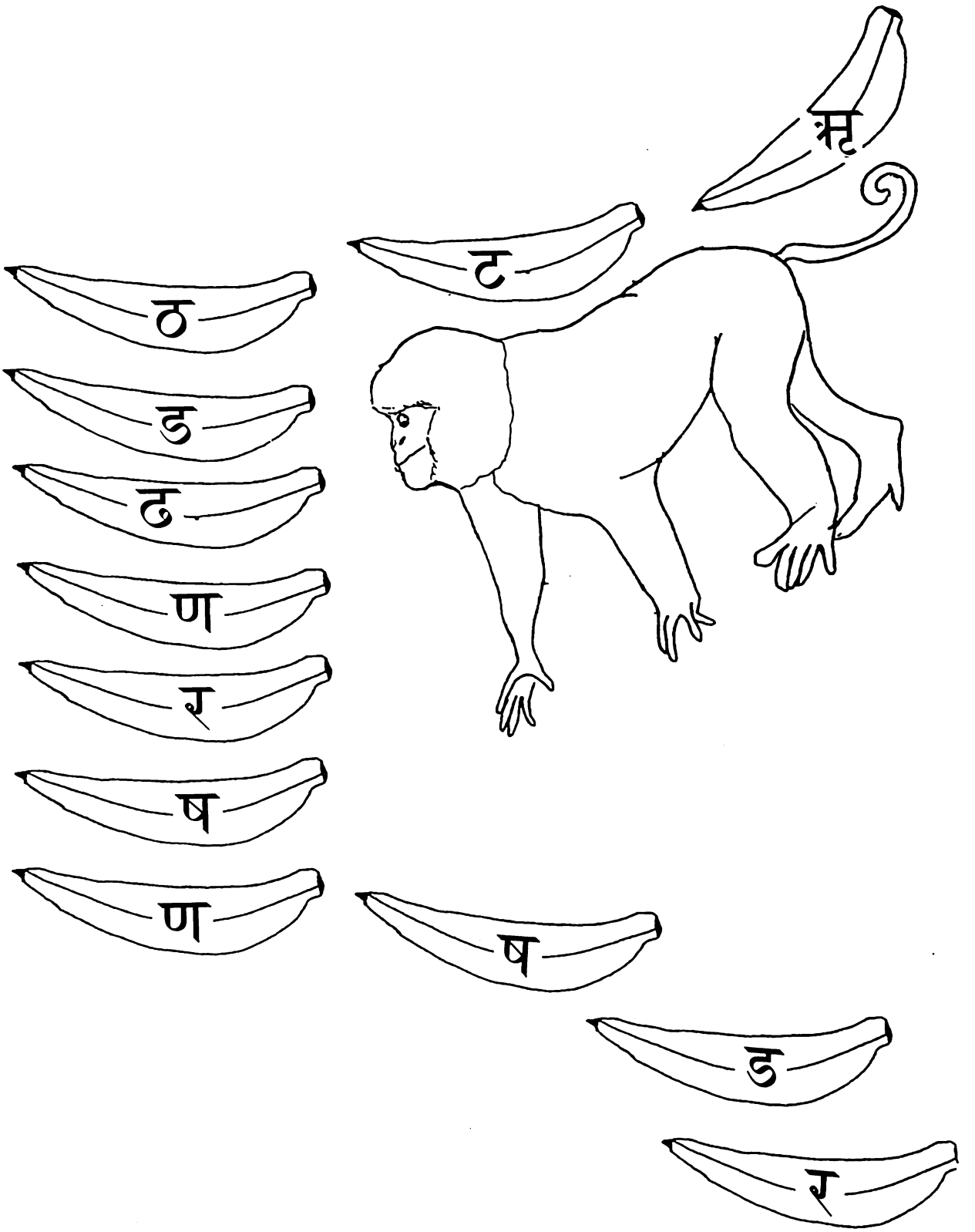
र ....

ष ....



The Monkey

Can you read the monkey's bananas?



The अ, इ and ऋ Families

Practise these letters and sound them:

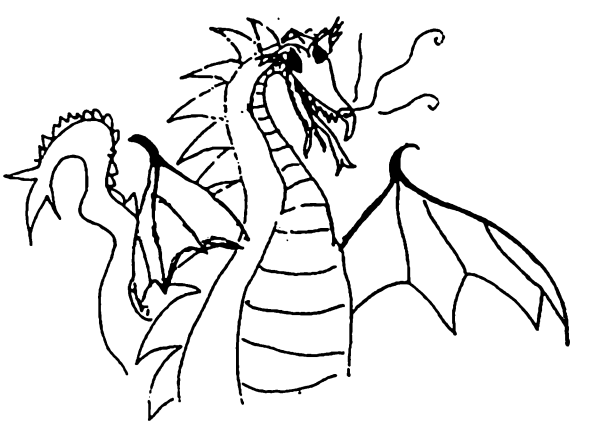
अ	इ	ऋ .....
क	च	ट .....
ख	छ	ठ .....
ग	ज	ड .....
घ	झ	ढ .....
ङ	ञ	ण .....
ह	य	र .....
	श	ष .....

Note to Teacher/Student: Recite the ल family before attempting the exercise below.

The ल Family

Copy the following letters:

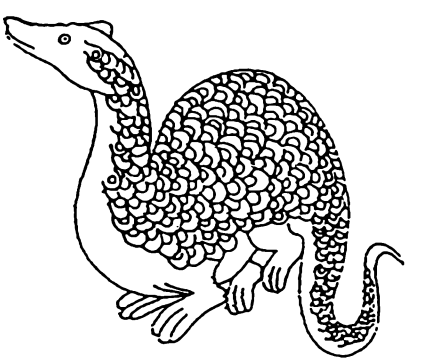
ल	त	थ



The ल Family

Copy these letters:

ढ	ढ		
ध	ध		
ढ			
ध			



The ल Family

Let's write each letter three times!

ल .....

त .....

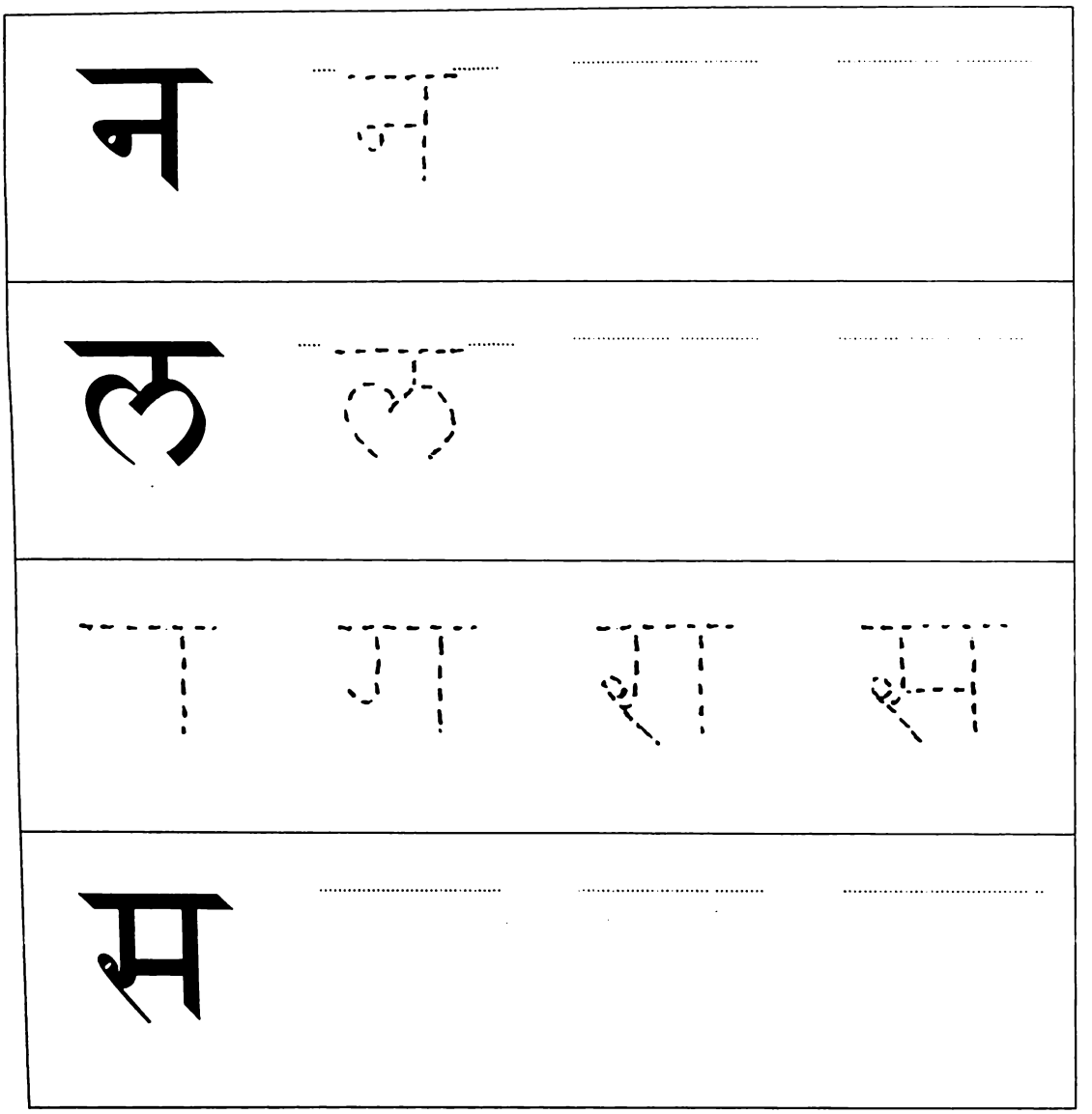
थ .....

द .....

ध .....

The ल Family

Practise the following letters:



Daily Reading Chart 5

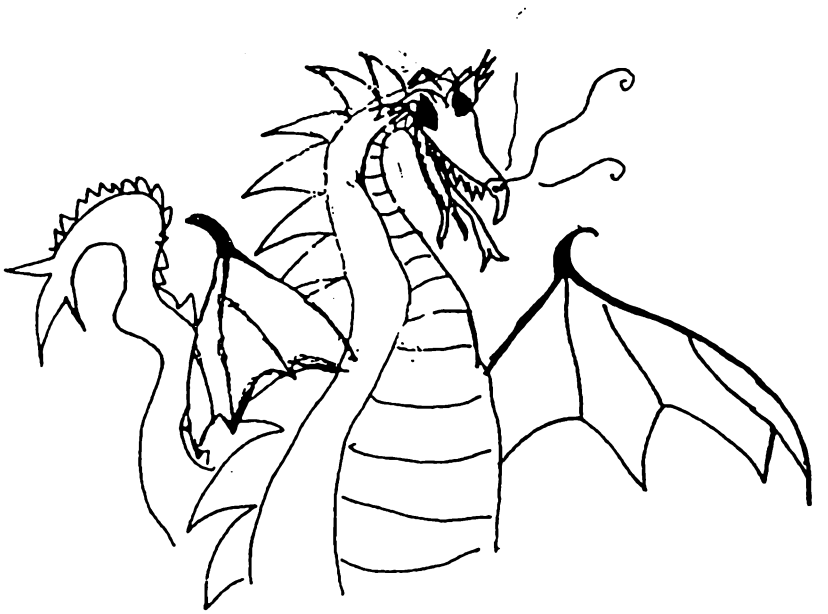
अ इ उ ऋ ऌ

अ क ख ग घ ङ ह

इ च छ ज झ ञ य श

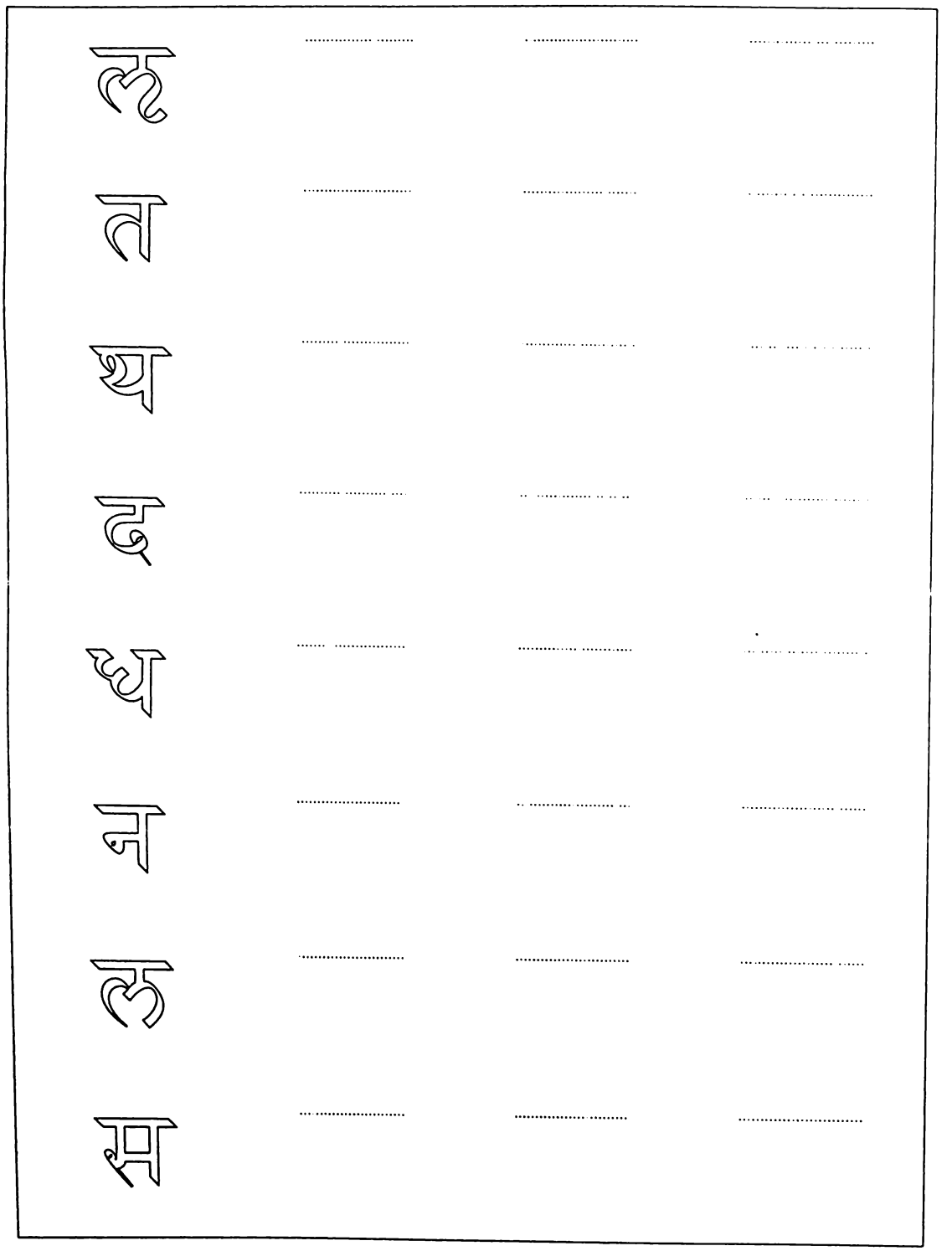
ऋ ट ठ ड ढ ण र ष

ऌ त थ द ध न ल स



The ल Family

Write and sound the whole ल family:



The ल Family

Practise the ल family. Then try to write the family from memory in your exercise book.

ल					
त					
थ					
ढ					
ध					
न					
ल					
स					

This is the home of the ल family. Copy each letter three times. Then, colour in the house.

ल

त

थ

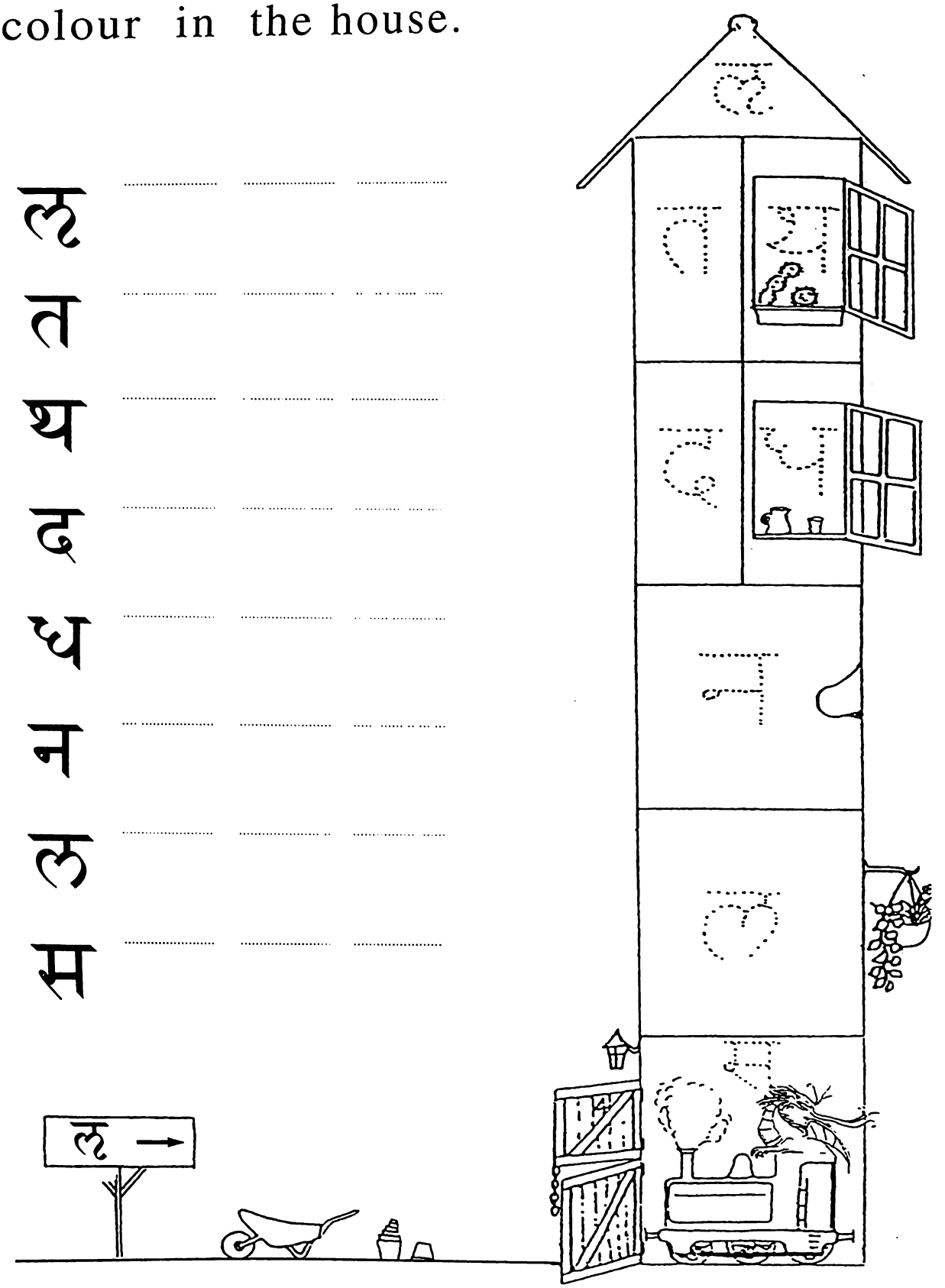
द

ध

न

ल

म



Game: Rescue the Princess

You can rescue the princess from the evil dragon by reading the following letters: (Don't forget to bring her back to the king by reading back again.)

ल						
त						
थ						
द						ध
ध						न
न	ल	स	थ	द	ल	ल

The अ इ ऋ and ऌ Families

Copy and sound these letters:

अ		इ		ऋ		ऌ	
क		च		ट		त	
ख		छ		ठ		थ	
ग		ज		ड		द	
घ		झ		ढ		ध	
ङ		ञ		ण		न	
ह		य		र		ल	
		श		ष		स	

The अ इ ऋ and ऌ Families

Copy and sound. This is the same page as before but backwards!

ह		श		ष		स	
ङ		य		र		ल	
घ		ञ		ण		न	
ग		भ		ढ		ध	
ख		ज		ड		द	
क		छ		ठ		थ	
अ		च		ट		त	
		इ		ऋ		ऌ	

Note to Teacher/Student: Introduce the concept of विसर्ग *(visarga), a breath at the end of a word, indicated by two dots, e.g.,* मः.

Reading Practice

Read across:

ग	ज	गज	गजः
ख	ग	खग	खगः
श	श	शश	शशः
न	र	नर	नरः
र	थ	रथ	रथः
शश	क	शशक	शशकः
न	ग	नग र	नगर

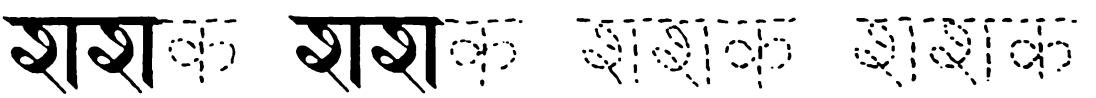
Writing Words

Complete each of the following lines to write the word शशक.

Write the first letter. Always begin with the top line.

Next write the second letter. Begin by joining its top line to the first letter.

Now write the third letter. Begin by joining its top line to the second letter.



Now copy these words in the same way.

शशक गज खग

Reading and Writing Practice

Read the following words and then copy them:

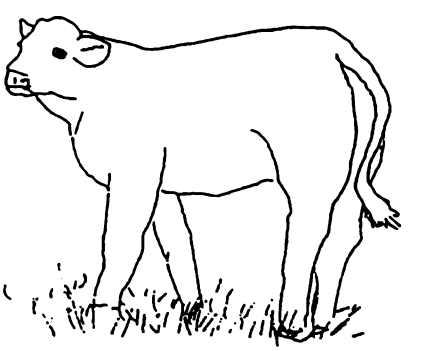
गजः	
खगः	
शशः	
नरः	
रथः	
शशकः	
नगर	

Note to Teacher/Student: Receite the उ family before attempting this exercise.

The उ Family

Copy the following letters:

उ	प	फ
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....



The उ Family

Copy these!

ब	
भ	

Now write all the letters we have practised so far in the उ family.

उ प फ ब भ

The उ Family

Now write the last two letters of the alphabet. Hooray!

म व

Daily Reading Chart 6

अ इ उ ऋ ऌ

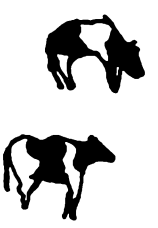
अ क ख ग घ ङ ह

इ च छ ज झ ञ य श

ऋ ट ठ ड ढ ण र ष

ऌ त थ द ध न ल स

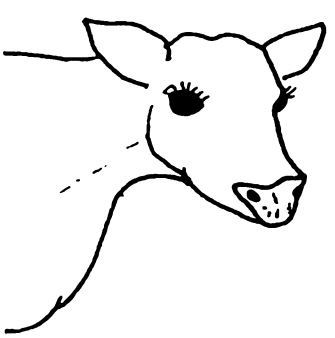
उ प फ ब भ म व



The उ Family

Write the whole उ family together:

उ प फ ब भ म व



The उ Family

Practise the उ family. Then try to write the family from memory in your exercise book.

उ					
प					
फ					
ब					
भ					
म					
व					

The last house on Sanskrita Street belongs to the उ family. Copy each letter three times. Then, colour in the house.

उ .....

प .....

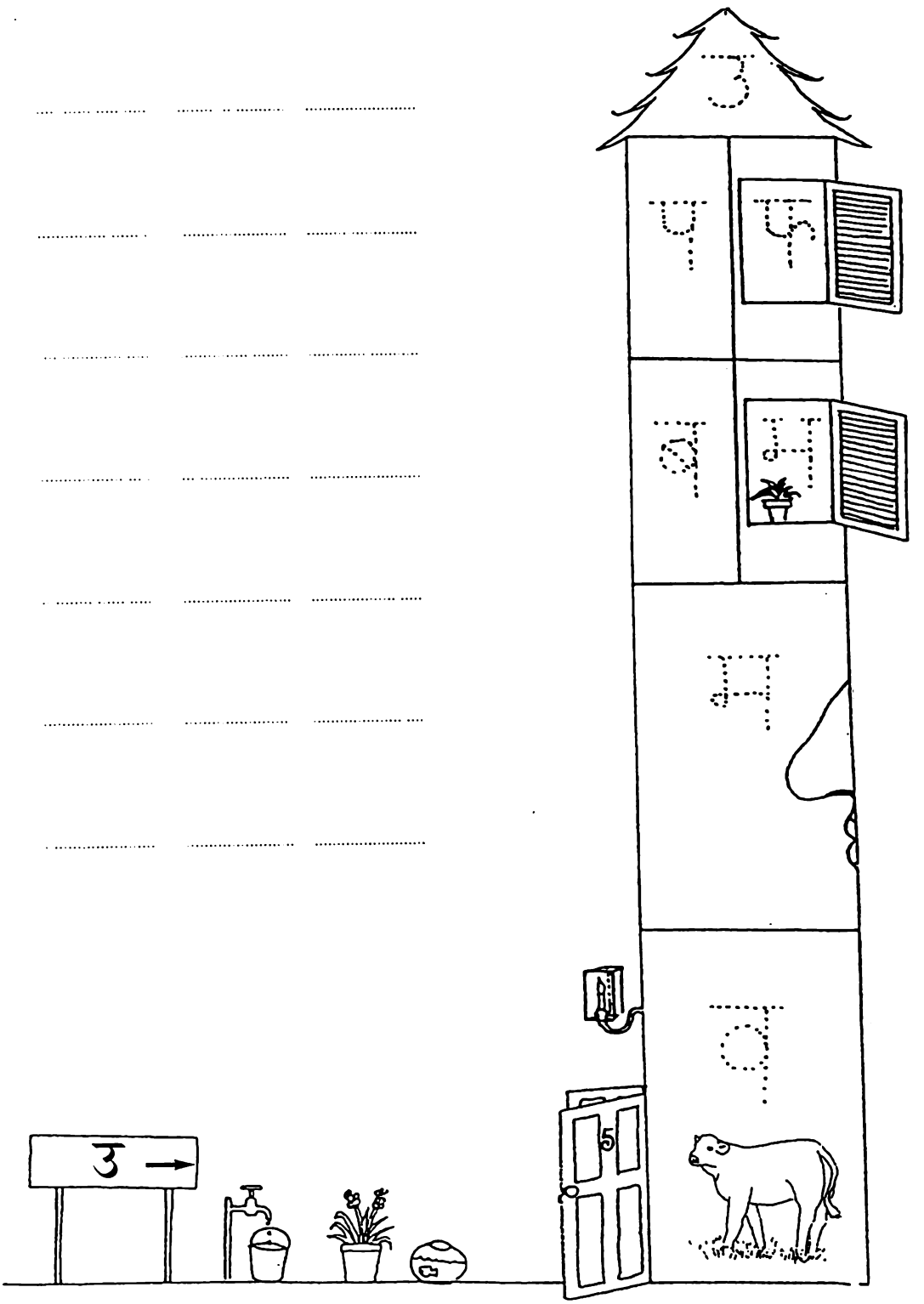
फ .....

ब .....

भ .....

म .....

व .....



Find the Farmer's Cows

Read the following letters so that the farmer can find his lost cows.

ब प म उ फ भ

व म भ ब फ प उ

भ म व

The Five Families

Read and copy each family twice. After each family see if you can write it in your exercise book from memory.

अ	क	ख	ग	घ	ङ	ह

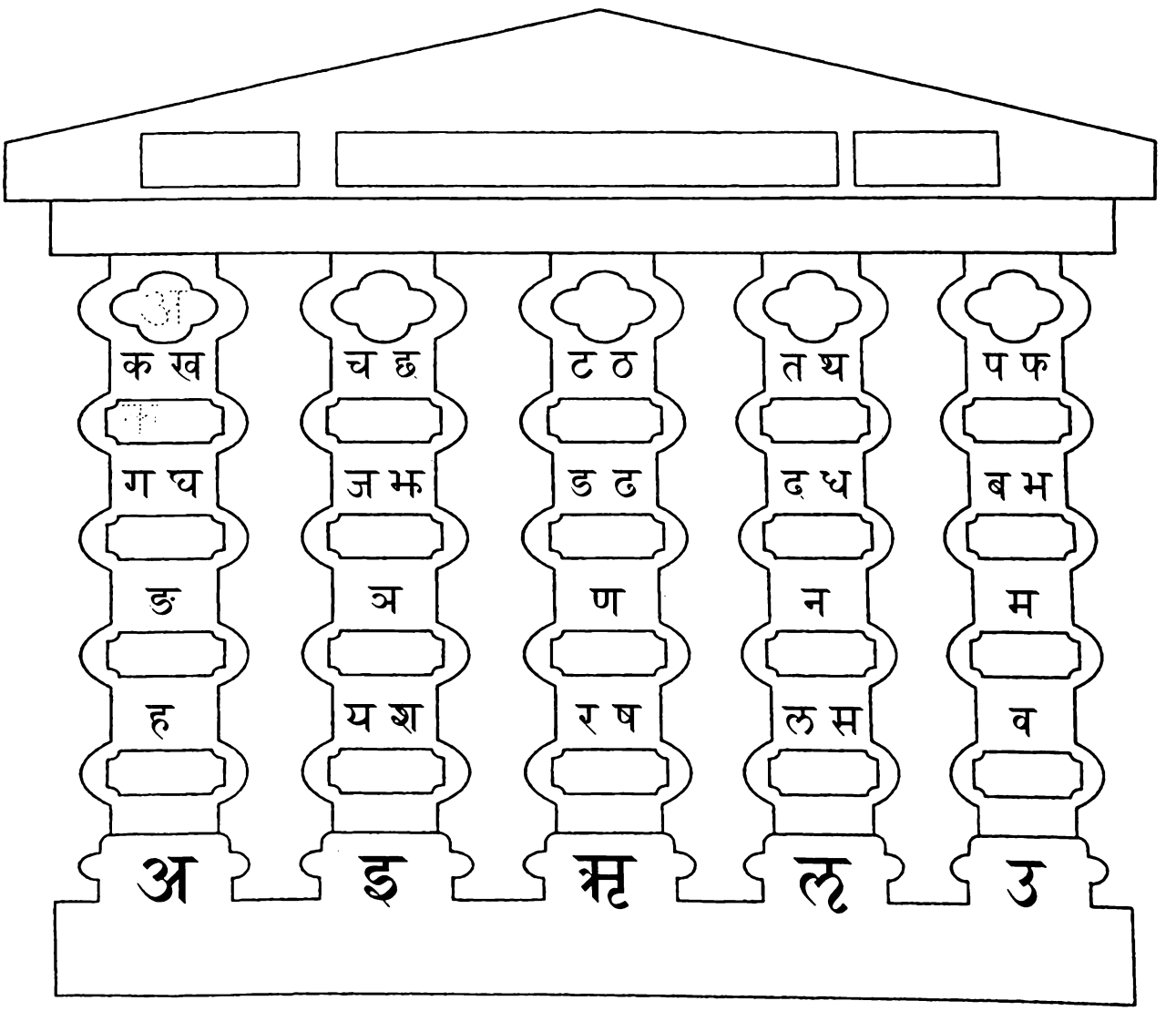
इ	च	छ	ज	झ	ञ	य	श

ऋ	ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण	र	ष

ऌ	त	थ	द	ध	न	ल	स

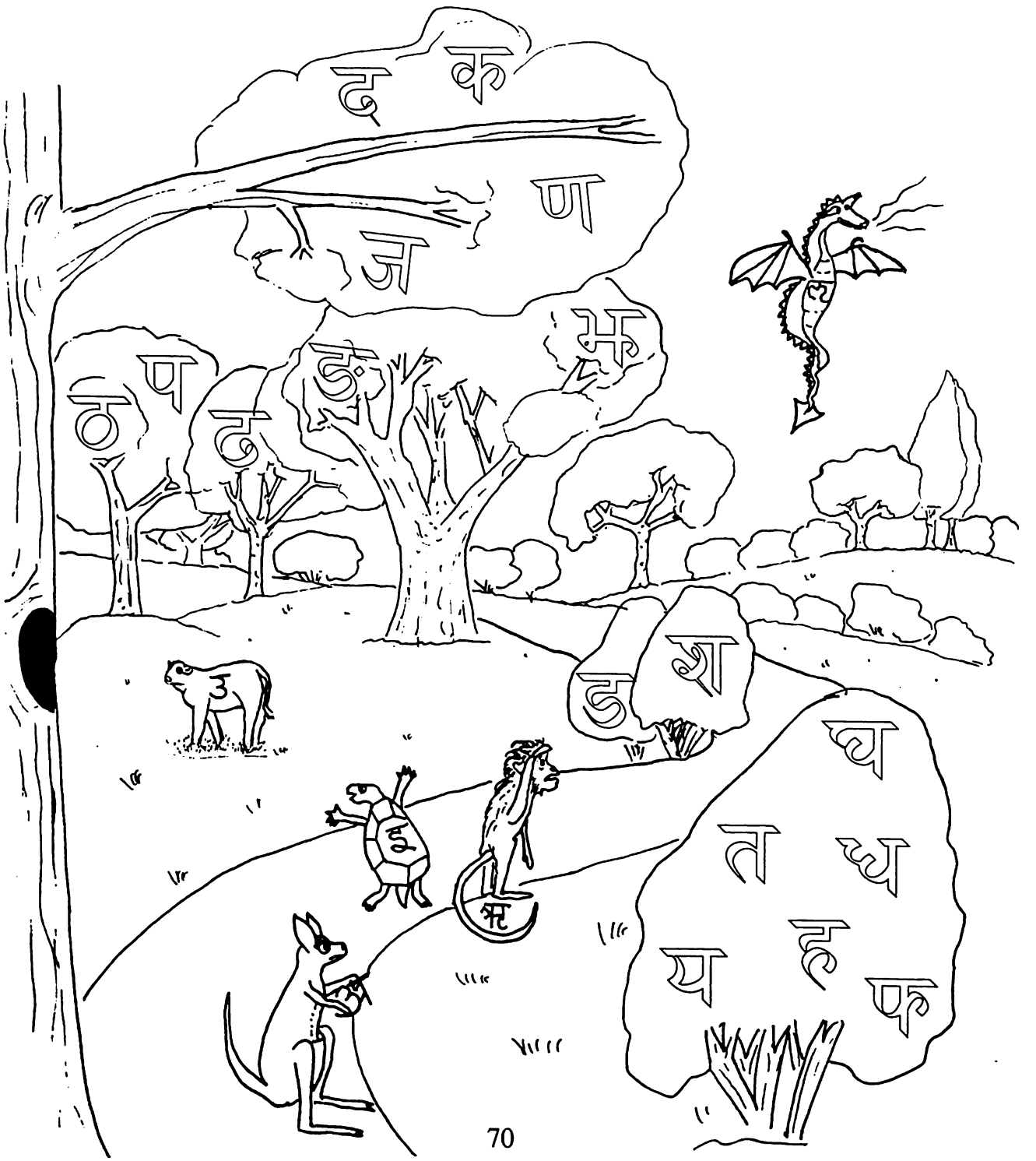
उ	प	फ	ब	भ	म	व

This temple is made of the five families of the Sanskrit alphabet. Write the letters in the correct spaces.

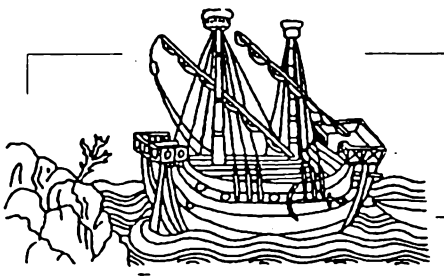


The Great Letter Hunt

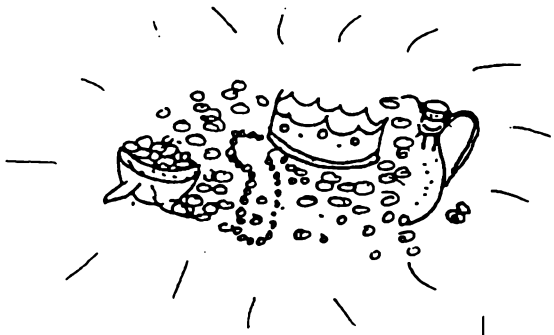
Different letters of the five families have been hidden in trees of the forest. Help our animal friends to find the letters by colouring any members of the अ family red, the इ family green, the म्र family blue, the ऌ family purple and the उ family yellow.



Help the explorers to find the treasure by reading the correct letters:



		अ	ऌ	उ	क	ग	
						ल	
						व	
						न	
					छ	च	
ढ	ण	ख	ऱ	थ	स	भ	
ग						ढ	
झ	ञ	म	प	ट	ष	य	श



Note to Teacher/Student: Review the concept of विसर्ग *(visarga), a breath at the end of the word, indicated by two dots, e.g.* मः.

Reading Practice

Read across:

न

क कः

च

च र चर

स सः

स ह सह

ह त हत

ह	स	हस
व	द	वद
त	व	तव
भ	व	भव
म	म	मम

Reading and Writing Practice

Read the following words down the columns and then copy them:

न	.....	हस	.....
कः	.....	रथः	.....
च	.....	वद	.....
चर	.....	तव	.....
सः	.....	भव	.....
सह	.....	मम	.....
हत	.....	नगर	.....

Seven Sanskrit Coursebooks for Beginners

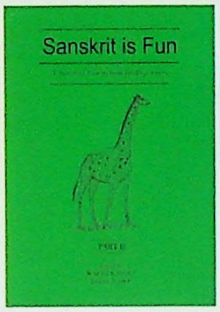
THESE Coursebooks are well-graded, and supported by appropriate illustrations tha make them very attractive to learners, particularly the young. Today many Indian and foreign schools/colleges offer Sanskrit as an optional subject. For such student these books are a very effective means of introducing Sanskrit, which they might not have studied previously. The book could also be useful for those involved in performing arts, such as dance and music, or for students of Yoga and Ayurveda—subjects which have many Sanskrit references.

All books are A4 Size (297x210mm) and available in Paperback, Spiral Bound and Hard Bound.

The first group of books entitled **Sanskrit is Fun** (Parts I-III) introduce the learners to the *Devanagari* alphabets, grouping the letter according to their place of articulation, called 'Family', which comprises both the vowels and consonants. Learners are first taught how to draw the letters.

Learning and teaching is also helped by the humorous presentation of the letters in the form of animals figures. The next step is to add vowel to the consonants, and then joint (com-pound) consonants. Family words and consonants are formed.

Pages: viii, 76



Pages: viii, 76

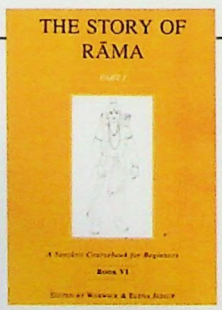
Pages: viii, 60

Pages: xiv, 162

Pages: xv, 189

The second group of books seek to teach Sanskrit with reference to the age-old stories of Krishna and Rama. The Stories of Krishna (Parts I-II) cover full declensions of the most common type of masculine, feminine and neuter nouns: conjugations of a simple verb in the present, future and past tenses and twelve stories based on the childhood of Krishna.

The Story of Rama books (Parts I–II) together relate, in 16 episodes, the story of the Ramayana. Part I introduces : the standard method of transliteration; the gerund ('having done something'); and the declension of the Sanskrit word for 'that' in all three genders. Part II covers an introduction to the imperative mood; other important noun and pronoun declensions; 'having done something' used with prefixes; the past passive participle; the conjugation of the middle voice and the verb 'to be' in present, future and past tenses; and the completion of the standard method of transliteration.



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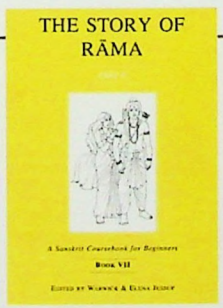

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